

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

MARYLAND STATE BOARD

OF

MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

2/7/9-3/
891431

1940-1941

GEORGE R. MITCHELL,
Chairman

ANNIE E. ELLIOTT
Vice-Chairman and Treasurer

MARIE WHITE FROSTMAN,
Secretary

HELEN L. ODOM
Chief Clerk

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Hon. Herbert R. O'Connor,
Governor of Maryland,

State House, Annapolis, Maryland

Sir: We have the honor to present to you the Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors, pursuant to the provisions of Section 9, Chapter 390, of the Acts of 1922.

The Motion Picture Board of the State makes the following report of its work for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 1940, and ending September 30, 1941.

General Statement

During the fiscal year two thousand two hundred eighty-three (2,283) motion picture films were reviewed, comprising six hundred thirty-one (631) feature films, (four of which were rejected "in toto") the balance being newsreels, shorts, cartoons, etc. There were four hundred forty-five (445) eliminations made on statutory grounds in two hundred three (203) prints. One film, "Merry Wives," was ordered cut to such an extent that the weight of the eliminations amounted to a virtual condemnation of the film. The sponsors of the picture did not appeal the decision of the Board to the Courts.

The four pictures rejected (in toto) were as follows:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Applicant</u>
GRANICA	Polish American Film Corp.
THE FRENCH NUDISTS OR TEN DAYS IN A NUDIST CAMP	Jewel Productions, Inc.
TRUTH ABOUT NUDISM (Stereopticon)	T. W. Villiers
NO GREATER SIN	Mary C. Ransome, University Film Productions, Inc.

A total of seventy-four (74) foreign subjects were reviewed by the Board, numerically listed as follows:

28 British
18 Polish
12 Yiddish
7 Russian

4 French
3 Italian
1 Viennese
1 Czech

In the censorship of foreign language films, the Foreign Language Committee, which acts in an advisory capacity to the Board, has been of invaluable assistance. The Foreign Language Committee is composed of more than twenty persons who are outstanding in the State of Maryland for their knowledge of the language and customs of foreign countries, and are able to give a high grade of intelligent advice in the Board's work of censoring foreign language films.

Work of the Board

Four hundred forty-five (445) eliminations of scenes, subtitles or dialogue, were made in the pictures reviewed. The eliminations ordered by the Board were made on statutory grounds. The foregoing statement of the past year, showing the number of eliminations and the number of rejected pictures, by no means adequately covers this phase of our work. During the course of the year many conferences were held with applicants for licensing and, wherever possible, constructive suggestions were made for the revision of pictures in order to avoid conflict with the Maryland Statute. This work is important to the producing companies, to the exhibitors and to the public, and cannot be fairly measured by any statistical record. Frequently the Board's suggestions have resulted in the revision of the picture by the applicant or the producing companies. Nor are the number of deletions shown in this fiscal year's record a true measure of the protection which the public received from the Board, for, unquestionably, the producing companies (both the Hays' organization and the Independents) have become so familiar with the State Motion Picture laws and regulations and with our procedure in

administering the same, that many scenes and dialogues, which are known to be offensive, under our statute, are eliminated before submission for review.

The Board now requires that all dialogue must be submitted at the time the application for license is made to the Board. This rule rigidly enforced has been found most advantageous, especially in its relationship to foreign films.

All of the review work is carried on daily at the Board's offices, 211 North Calvert Street, in Baltimore. The two projectionists employed by the Board are constantly on duty and, as a rule, each film that is presented is reviewed by two members of the Board. Pictures containing controversial matters are rescreened several times before all members of the Board, and after careful study action is taken, either licensing the picture as presented, or directing that eliminations be made, or rejecting the picture "in toto." The applicant then receives notice of the action of the Board and where eliminations are made or a rejection is ordered, statutory reasons for such action are given in writing. In the event the applicant is dissatisfied he (or his representative) may, through appeal, request the entire Board to again sit in review on the picture. After such review and after hearing the arguments of the applicant or his representative and giving due consideration, the Board announces its final decision. Should the decision be unfavorable to the applicant, he still has his remedy in the courts.

Seven thousand three hundred thirty-eight (7,338) original reels were reviewed by the Maryland Board during the past year, with a footage of 6,180,516 feet, which, if joined together would measure more than one thousand one hundred seventy and one half (1,170.5) miles

of film actually passing through our projection machines in the process of screening these films. In connection with such review work, the dialogue must be read carefully, consultations had, and decisions made. A file is kept on each picture, including the application, dialogue and action taken, as well as a record of the licenses issued, together with the correspondence.

Receipts and Disbursements

The total receipts of the Board during the past fiscal year were \$55,877.00 as compared with \$53,180.00 for the preceding year, an increase of \$2,697.00. The expenditures of the Board were \$30,347.18. The net revenue to the State, after deducting the cost of operation, was \$25,529.82. During the three year period (1939-1940-1941) in which your present Board has been in operation, the following figures show a total increase in revenue to the State of \$7,218.00

Receipts

October 1, 1938 -			
September 30, 1939	\$ 50,180.00	\$ 1,521.00	Excess over 1937-1938
October 1, 1939 -			
September 30, 1940	53,180.00	3,000.00	Excess over 1938-1939
October 1, 1940 -			
September 30, 1941	55,877.00	<u>2,697.00</u>	Excess over 1939-1940

\$ 7,218.00 Total Increase in
Receipts for three year period 1938-1941.

Original films and reissues are charged for at the rate of \$2.00 per thousand feet or less, duplicate films at \$1.00 per thousand feet or less. All approvals of duplicates must be applied for by the same person within the year after the examination and approval of the original. A charge of \$1.00 is made for restoring a seal of approval on a censored film.

Attention is respectfully called to the financial statement appended to this report which shows the financial growth of this

State Department and the increasing amount reverting to the State Treasury each year since 1920. In this period a total net revenue of \$230,844.32 reverted to the State Treasury.

Introduction of Soundies (Juke Boxes) into Maryland

The latter part of the year saw the entrance of "Soundies" (Juke Boxes) into Maryland. On the insertion of a dime, these boxes, carrying a unit of a 16 m.m. film, furnish eight individual subjects of entertainment, of three minutes each. In anticipation of these Soundies, the Maryland Motion Picture Law was amended at the last Legislature to establish a particular rate for all films, less than 35 m.m. at a censorship fee based on \$4.00 per thousand feet or fraction thereof on originals and \$2.00 per thousand feet or fraction thereof on duplicate prints. Further, in anticipation of a large volume of work by the Board incident to this particular work, an additional inspector was authorized by the Governor to care for the emergency. To date, although quite a number of these machines and their equipment have been in the course of manufacture, it is apparent that in a large measure, because of the war situation, the release to the market has been held up. The effect in Maryland has been an aggregate of some thirty boxes, allocated to the City of Baltimore and to several of the counties. However, trade reports locally are that allocations will increase moderately, despite general trade reports. Because of the shortage of materials for National Defense, the manufacture of the Juke boxes will be discontinued at this time, therefore, any prognostication as to the extent of the usage is problematical, depending entirely upon the exigencies of the war situation.

Censorship of Films

Some thirty units of original, together with a number of duplicate films, have been presented to the Board. Quite a few deletions were

ordered after review because of boldness and suggestiveness. However in subsequent films there has been a marked improvement, going to show that the film producers are endeavoring to fully cooperate with the censorship requirements.

Among the chief concerns of censors are crime films which must be dealt with in their various phases. Crime serials, so largely patronized by youth, run for periods of from twelve to fifteen weeks in "neighborhood" houses, and thereby focus the attention of immature minds on exploits of crime and daring. It is a question whether cycles of such films have not a detrimental and lasting effect upon the social attitudes of children. Many admirable educational films of the same length are now available in theatres frequented by youth for children's programs on Fridays and Saturdays. It is suggested by this Board that organizations interested in better motion pictures for children advocate the use of better material for such programs. Appeals have been made to this Board to deal with the excessive amounts of drinking shown in films. The chief complaint is that such scenes are generally shown in a favorable light and that the evils of drinking are rarely depicted on the screen. Again, the Board has been appealed to by those agencies interested in public safety who ask that the Board take steps to reduce scenes showing careless handling of automobiles and traffic violations. It is again noted that such incidents are treated lightly and rarely condemned. The Board believes that the grounds of complaint in both cases are not without foundation. A summary of the analysis charts which the Board makes on each feature picture shows that all of these factors in pictures that are screened are carefully checked, special attention being given, in addition to the moral content, to excess drinking, exploitation of crime, and cruelty to animals.

The Board has for the past six months been working untiringly to secure suitable headquarters in the interests of safety and which will not only take care of this situation, but will provide sufficient floor space for the increasing work of the Board.

Inspection Staff

This department consists of five persons who are required to visit the motion picture theatres throughout the State for the purpose of checking the requirements of the Motion Picture Law. There are over two hundred twenty-five theatres in the State of Maryland. Our Inspection Department checks daily all irregularities or violations of the law and, as a result of their splendid work and constant vigilance, serious violations have been reduced.

Itinerant or Mobile Operators

Three mobile tent shows, flying from Florida to this section, were detected in displaying uncensored 35 m.m. films in conjunction with vaudeville entertainment. All films owned and carried by them were inspected and ordered in for censorship. These itinerants usually set up their tents in remote parts of the counties, not adjacent to established motion picture houses.

16 m.m. Films Rented to Occasionals in Counties

It is believed that close inspection by the Board's personnel has resulted in a vast improvement in having such films presented for censorship regulations. Quite a few were ordered in by the Inspection Department during the current year.

Industry Cooperation

The Board wishes to take this occasion to express its appreciation for the wholehearted cooperation it has received from the theatre owners, managers, and their projectionists within the State of Maryland, and also from the New York and Washington representatives of the Film Industry.

Personnel

The year 1941 marked the advent to the Board of an Official Reviewer in the person of William C. Wright. This position is looked upon by all State Censor Boards as one of major importance and practically all State Censor Boards have more than one Reviewer to share the important duties which this position entails.

During the year due to the advancement of Harry J. Hunt to the newly created position of Inspector of 16 m.m. Juke Boxes (Soundies) and Itinerant Movies, an addition to the Inspection Staff was made in the person of Oscar W. McCleary. Also by reason of the call to service of Film Examiner and Measurer, Nelson Brizendine, this vacancy was filled by the appointment of Morris Bratman.

Following is a statistical summary of the operations of the Censor Board.

Respectfully submitted,

George R. Mitchell, Chairman

Annie E. Elliott, Vice-Chairman

Marie W. Pressman, Secretary

December 31, 1941

Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors Table
Showing Total Annual Receipts and Disbursements, Together with
the Amounts Reverting to the State Treasury for Period
October 1, 1920 - September 30, 1941

<u>Period</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>Amt. Reverting to Treasur</u>
10-1-20 to 9-30-21	\$ 26,488.33	\$ 19,025.26	\$ 7,468.07
10-1-21 to 9-30-22	26,866.90	19,842.12	7,024.78
10-1-22 to 9-30-23	27,059.51	19,892.93	7,166.58
10-1-23 to 9-30-24	26,338.50	20,730.44	5,608.06
10-1-24 to 9-30-25	29,249.50	22,207.24	7,042.26
10-1-25 to 9-30-26	30,207.92	22,662.82	7,545.10
10-1-26 to 9-30-27	32,498.55	24,883.80	7,614.75
10-1-27 to 9-30-28	38,165.57	27,734.69	10,430.88
10-1-28 to 9-30-29	44,486.27	32,937.76	11,548.51
10-1-29 to 9-30-30	38,954.98	31,718.26	7,236.72
10-1-30 to 9-30-31	35,245.85	31,816.79	3,429.06
10-1-31 to 9-30-32	35,637.44	32,158.81	3,478.63
10-1-32 to 9-30-33	35,152.54	24,207.93	944.41
10-1-33 to 9-30-34	36,563.00	27,174.49	9,388.51
10-1-34 to 9-30-35	39,463.00	27,577.76	11,885.24
10-1-35 to 9-30-36	44,073.00	28,927.98	15,145.02
10-1-36 to 9-30-37	49,293.00	28,855.10	20,437.90
10-1-37 to 9-30-38	48,659.00	30,197.34	18,461.66
10-1-38 to 9-30-39	50,180.00	30,302.92	19,877.08
10-1-39 to 9-30-40	53,180.00	29,598.72	23,581.28
10-1-40 to 9-30-41	<u>55,877.00</u>	<u>30,347.18</u>	<u>25,529.82</u>
	\$803,639.66	\$572,800.34	\$230,844.32

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

October 1, 1940 - - September 30, 1941

Year and Month	R E E L S		Substitute Seals	Receipts	Total
	Original	Duplicate			
<u>1940</u>	739	3,773		\$ 4,574.00	
October			109	<u>109.00</u>	\$ 4,983.00
November	512	3,538	102	<u>4,342.00</u> <u>102.00</u>	4,444.00
December	607	3,547	102	<u>4,394.00</u> <u>102.00</u>	4,496.00
<u>1941</u>	631	3,865		4,570.00	
January			147	<u>147.00</u>	4,817.00
February	493	3,075	95	<u>3,826.00</u> <u>95.00</u>	3,921.00
March	786	3,936	124	<u>4,928.00</u> <u>124.00</u>	5,052.00
April	455	3,232	90	<u>3,813.00</u> <u>90.00</u>	3,903.00
May	645	3,411	99	<u>4,321.00</u> <u>99.00</u>	4,420.00
June	681	4,325	123	<u>5,277.00</u> <u>123.00</u>	5,400.00
July	633	3,532	96	<u>4,506.00</u> <u>96.00</u>	4,602.00
August	645	3,621	125	<u>4,646.00</u> <u>125.00</u>	4,771.00
September	711	3,812	148	<u>4,920.00</u> <u>148.00</u>	5,068.00
	<u>7,338</u>	<u>43,667</u>	<u>1,360</u>		\$ 55,877.00

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

For the fiscal Year Ended September 30, 1941

FEEES:

Original Reels . . 35 MM (6,115,275 feet) . .	\$ 13,732.00	
Including 53 trailers, 14,393 feet (\$106.00)		
Original Reels . . 16 MM (46,869 feet)	284.00	
" " . . 16 MM, Reversible 18,372 ft.	88.00	\$ 14,104.00
Duplicate " . . 35 MM (36,541,111 feet)	\$ 40,363.00	
" " . . 16 MM (3,196 feet)	10.00	
" " . . 16 MM, Reversible 16,693 ft	40.00	40,413.00
Sale of Substitute Seals (1,360)		1,360.00
Deposited to credit of State Treasurer		\$ 55,877.00

EXPENSES:

SALARIES

Board Members	\$ 7,200.00	
Other Employees	17,095.09	
<u>OTHER EXPENSES</u>		\$ 24,295.09

Light, Heat, Power and Water	242.05	
Traveling	630.50	
Communication	600.61	
Printing, other than Office Supplies	72.00	
Contractual, Film Seals	1,293.43	
Office Supplies	500.72	
Motion Picture Machine Supplies	97.77	
Office Equipment	114.23	
Motion Picture Equipment	188.28	
Rent	2,280.00	
Insurance	32.50	
		6,052.09

\$ 30,347.18

BUDGET ACCOUNT (PER COMPTROLLER)

Appropriation (1941)	\$ 30,555.50	\$ 30,564.86
Refund (Communication, Item 206)	4.25	
" (Sale of Seals, Item 208)	5.11	
Less Reversion to Reserve Fund		217.68
		30,347.18
General Fund Disbursement		\$ 30,347.18

Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors

CLASSIFICATION OF FILMS

October 1, 1940 - - September 30, 1941

	<u>Original and Duplicate Films</u>				<u>Adver- tising</u>	<u>Miscell- aneous</u>
	<u>Dramas</u>	<u>Comedies</u>	<u>News</u>	<u>Cartoons</u>		
October	400	286	580	82	9	3
November	364	225	581	78	9	1
December	354	268	511	58	8	4
January	368	327	586	118	20	0
February	288	275	539	65	7	3
March	391	315	598	86	50	1
April	292	215	521	94	16	2
May	326	249	587	57	14	1
June	421	305	594	81	15	2
July	353	237	594	74	9	7
August	377	244	621	90	7	6
September	392	268	562	85	18	5
	4,326	3,214	6,874	968	182	35

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Films, Original	2,283
Films, Duplicate	13,316
Reels, Original	7,338
Reels, Duplicate	43,667
Number of Feet, Original	6,180,516
Number of Feet, Duplicate	36,561,000
Films Approved	15,392
Films Rejected	4
Films Eliminated	203

15,599 51,005 42,741,516 15,599

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

ELIMINATIONS

OCTOBER 1, 1940 - - SEPTEMBER 30, 1941

<u>Original and Duplicate</u>					
	Dramas	Comedies	News	Cartoons	Advertising
October	17	0	0	0	1
November	11	1	0	0	0
December	8	3	16	0	0
January	17	0	0	0	0
February	15	2	0	0	0
March	12	0	0	0	0
April	10	0	10	0	0
May	19	2	0	0	0
June	12	0	0	0	0
July	14	2	0	0	0
August	22	0	0	0	0
September	7	2	0	0	0
	164	12	26	0	1

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Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS CHARTS

October 1, 1940 - - September 30, 1941

	Social Drama	Comedy Drama	Musical Drama	Mystery Drama	Western & Action	Crime & Horror	Documen- tary
October	21	19	5	1	12	4	0
November	12	8	7	8	10	2	1
December	21	12	0	3	8	0	0
January	17	9	1	6	12	0	2
February	12	8	3	11	5	1	1
March	19	6	6	11	11	2	0
April	13	7	1	4	6	0	0
May	21	8	2	6	9	2	0
June	17	13	5	4	11	6	0
July	19	17	3	3	12	3	0
August	17	11	2	2	11	6	2
September	22	16	0	5	9	1	0
	211	134	35	64	116	27	6

Total number of films analysed - 593